

8-1-1861

Arthur McKinstry to Mother

Arthur McKinstry

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Tell Frank Hopper that as a general rule I have a little
time and less commences than he. I have neither seat
nor table. But if ~~he~~ will write I will answer as often as
I can. Mother and the "Censor" having first claims upon me.

Washington Aug 1st 1861

Dear Mother, (We get pay in a day or two)

and as often as you can. My address is
C. D. Col. Taylor 3d. Regt.
Washington
D. C.

It rains very hard to day and
I have a first rate chance to write to you
more. We are all well and in fine spirits.
I think the water here agrees well with me for
I have not been so well before since I left school.
The climate is delightful. We are kept very strictly
and it is difficult to get a pass outside our
regimental lines. Being dead broke I have no object
to go except to wash, and that is allowed.
I see by the Balt. Sun. - as much a secret paper
as can be found, if they only dared to show it -
that there was a row the other day in Western Va.
and the rebels were routed with a loss of 15,000
while our loss was only 600. A great force is now
collected here and the next blow must sweep the
"Old Dominion" clean of rebels. I went out to wash the
other day and went over to see the 2nd Rhode Island
regt. Gov. Sprague goes with them and fares not so well as
our colonel. I ~~hate~~ the man for me. The banner stood by
the tent and was torn by cannon and rifle balls, and
splashed with blood. They had a splendid gray eagle

chained to his perch in the midst of the camp. Overhead was a delightful grove and all seemed to enjoy themselves amazingly. They were a very fine corps of men and adore their gallant governor, who led them at Bull's run. Fenton as you see kindly forwards our letters - and even furnishes considerable stationery.

It rains like the mischief to day and so we don't drill or do anything else. I suppose that by this you are nearly or quite through haying. It's grass good with you. I am glad to hear how you get the wheat cut. It is very well arranged. I suppose that you will sell well now. I should think that the great demand for horses in the army would improve the market. At any rate she ought to sell now better than you could by keeping her over. Kate I presume is as cute and sane as ever. She will make a good farm horse. Our reg't is alone as yet but if it had not been so wet we should have removed and encamped with the other two reg'ts which came on before us. I shall be right glad to see Bob. McKimstry for he is a splendid fellow. Your caution about intimacy is decidedly wasted. Home or home affairs are about the last thing a soldier thinks of conversing about. It is the present - the future that engages our attention and only the vicissitudes and adventures of the past are

alluded to - not the quiet scenes of home, or home affairs.
As for reading I get little except papers. If I was liable
to any injury from such a source I should have been
long ago. As for society I may feel the need of good
when I return to the hill, but not here where the
sons of the first families of our county shoulder their
musket at my side. The average of society in our
company is better than with you, and I find no
difficulty in choosing my friends - some of them
especially pointed out by Uncle Willard. When I go
to visit outside our company you cannot suppose
that I should go to seek more questionable friends.
So just dismiss all concern about my associations.
We are often stinted in our food and just pick up
a row and get more. We don't get all we are entitled to
and if things don't mend I will get transferred to
the Naval Brigade. I think however that these
things will be righted soon and offenders punished.
I do not like our new captain - Caspar K. Abell very
well. I have not a thing against him personally
but his treatment of me is so arrogant and harsh
that he is rendering himself very unpopular. I am
determined not to shrink duty and don't do it - thus when
I ask anything - I can get it if any one can but when

he reproves any slight offence he does it in very harsh terms and so the company are down upon him. He is not at all severe in punishment but his harsh manner does injustice to his actual disposition. As I said before I have been punctual, have sustained no reproof, and have nothing against him but rather the contrary - but he is very unpopular with the most of the men. The orders were strict about baggage and as I was liable to march at once into Va. I judged it most prudent to send back my trunk but keep almost everything in it. I sent it to Uncle Willard's care and when you go there you are pretty sure to find it. The lock has got worn and though locked it will open by working the lid up and down and sideways a little. The pants, vest, shirts and hat I was very glad to get. The pants alone will save the charges for they are good and fit well while the others are more soiled and shrink and fade abominably. The coarse blue pants we wore off are very good every day wear and very tough, and we have also very good linen pants so that I am abundantly supplied with good clothes. We have a fine cool breeze during the heat of the day and it is just right and I don't take cold as by the lake winds. By ascending the hill back of our tents I can see most of the city - the Capitol and other public buildings, the Potomac - and Arlington Heights and even to Fairfax C. H. Spire which is seen far off in the South West. Love to all at home, Remember me to Peter's folks and other friends and write as soon

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P. E. Austin
me



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